

RTF C23-2

## **Experimental Video**

Fall 2005

MW 3-5, 119 Louis Hall

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The history of U.S. independent video ranging from creative documentaries to avant garde experiments will form the core of the course. Works by a variety of makers will be screened to examine the expressive involvement of the maker in the work and the resulting aesthetic effect. The course will sketch a history of experimental form and include two thematic concerns:

personal/autobiographical/diary work and experimental expository essay work. In addition, the course will consider the institutional and economic infrastructure of the contemporary artworld, and relations of art video to adjacent areas of performance, interactive and online, and installation art.

The screenings and discussions are organized to present a range of different styles and subject matters in order to provoke thought about the artistic, personal, ethical, and political issues involved. Readings will illustrate various critical approaches to video art: they are keyed to works being presented and should be done in advance of the class screenings. Discussion of specific works is the central teaching method. Thus, attendance is important and participation in discussion will affect your grade. Some of the tapes are available at the University Library's Mitchell Media Center, however the introductory remarks and class discussion following a screening are as important for learning as simply viewing the tapes.

Undergrads will take in class mid-term, a short paper on outside viewing, short reports on off campus screenings, and a take-home final. In addition, some CMS (Blackboard) assignments will be made.

Graduate students are expected to pursue an independent research topic to be arranged with the professor by the start of the third week of classes and write a substantial paper to complete the course

In addition, all students are required to attend at least three off-campus experimental video events (from a choice of various events) and write short reports. [An example would be the mid-October screenings of the annual RESFEST festival at the Museum of Contemporary Art.] These will be announced as more information becomes available. Additional viewing on campus is also required: typically at the University Library media center.

## Textbooks

Books in this area tend to go out of print very fast. Therefore only one currently available title has been ordered through Norris Center Store. You may be able to find copies of out of print or hard to find books mentioned in the course through Amazon.com or alibris. com or at area bookstores such as Powell's.

Michael Rush, New Media in Art (second edition) Thames & Hudson \$16.95

Readings will be available online through Library reserve, and as inclasss handouts. Some books will be on reserve for the course.

REGARDING THE SCHEDULE: EXPECT CHANGES

## Wed Sept 21

Course administration

Intro lecture: what is experimetnal video art?

Screening:

Kit Fitzgerald & Joh Sanborn, Ear to Ground (1979, 5 min.,) CK

Valie Export, Perfect Pair (13 min ) RTF

Dara Birnbaum, Technology Transformation: Wonder Woman (1978, 7 min)  
[MMC]

Bob Snyder, Winter Notebook (1975) [MMC]

THURS SEPT 22--SPECIAL INSTALLATION EVENT!

Going Up?

by Debra and Dave Tolchinsky

A site-specific synchronized multimonitor elevator installation inspired by recent limb-lengthening procedures

Artists' Reception

Thursday, September 22, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Exhibit runs September 12 - October 14

Sunday - Saturday, 8 a.m. - midnight

Norris University Center

(in the elevator)

1999 Campus Drive

more info: [www.debratolchinsky.com/goingup](http://www.debratolchinsky.com/goingup)

Essays by Michelle Citron, Scott Curtis,  
Jeffrey Sconce, and Pam Thurschwell

### **Mon Sept 26**

Bill Viola, *The Reflecting Pool* (1979, 7 min.) [RTF]

Performance

Sadie Benning, *If Every Girl Had a Diary*, (1994, 6 min. Pixelvision) [RTF]

Bruce Nauman, *Stamping in the Studio* (1968, 60 min; 5 min. excerpt) [MMC]

Shirley Clarke, *Tongues* (1982, 20 min.) [CK]

Linda Montano, *Mitchell's Death* [RTF]

### **Wed Sept 28**

Read:

William Boddy "Live Television"

Gabriel M. Paletz, "Orson Welles and Television"

Robert Rosen, "Ernie Kovacs, Video Artist"

#### **History: early video art, 1**

Meghan Sutherland on video and broadcast tv

Screening

Ernie Kovacs, from broadcast tv [RTF--to select]

Selection: Orson Welles "Around the World with Orson Welles"

Selection: *The Continental*

Chuck

Vito Acconci, *Undertone* (10 min. excerpt) [MMC]

### **Mon Oct 3**

#### **History: early video art, 2**

Reading:

Overview of the site:

<http://www.davidsonfiles.org/>

David Hall, "Early Video Art: A Look At A Controversial History"

<http://www.davidsonfiles.org/early%20video%20art.html>

"[Video Journey Through Utopia](#)," by Paul Ryan.□

<http://www.davidsonfiles.org/videojourneythroughutopa.html>

Screening

William Wegman, *Two dogs and ball, Used Car Salesman, Dog Biscuit in glass jar* (8 min.) [MMC]

Arthur Ginsberg and Video Free America, eds. The Continuing Story of Carel and Ferd (34 min. excerpt) [MMC]

Dan Graham, Performer;audience;mirror (23 min.) [MMC]

## **Wed Oct 5**

### **History: early video art, 3**

[The Paik/Abe Synthesizer](http://www.davidsonsfles.org/paikabesitythesizer.html), by George Fifiield.

<http://www.davidsonsfles.org/paikabesitythesizer.html>

Nam June Paik, Merce by Merce by Paik (28 min) [MMC]

Nam June Paik, 60 min. The New American Cinema (broadcast) WHA, Madison WI [CK]

## **Mon Oct 10**

### **Feminist videos, 1**

Nina Sobell, Hey! Baby! Chickey! (1978, ---) MMC

Martha Rosler, Semiotics of the Kitchen (1973, ----)MMC

Joan Jonas, Vertical Roll ( )

Irene Seaglove, The Mom Tapes (30 min.) MMC

## **Wed Oct 12**

Inclass midterm exam

Exam videos TBA

## **Mon Oct 17**

Guerilla television

TVTV, The lord of the Universe (1974, 59 min.) RTF

Ant Farm & T. R. Uthco, Eternal Frame, (23 MIN.) MMC

## **Wed Oct 19**

### **Feminist videos, 2**

Lynda Benglis, Female Sensibility (14 min.) MMC

Mindy Farber, Delirium, (1993, 23 min.) MMC

Dara Birnbaum, Kiss the Girls, make them cry (1979, 7 min.) MMC

## **Mon Oct 24**

Midterm takehome essay due

Choose one:

Bruce Nauman, Wall/floor positions 1969, (60 min.) MMC

George Kuchar, Thursday People (1987, 60 min.) MMC  
TVTV, Four More Years ( 60 min.) MMC  
Martha Rosler, Vital Statistics of a citizen, simply obtained (38 min.) MMC  
Vito Acconci, The Red Tapes , Part II (58 Min. ) MMC

Screening

Bill Viola, Chott el-Djerid (A Portrait in Light and Heat)) (1979 , 28 min.) [RTF]

**Wed Oct 26**

Scott Rankin, The Pure (1993, 60 MIN.) MCC

**Mon Oct 31** (Halloween)

Dan Reeves, Obsessive Becoming (1995, 54 min) RTF

**Wed Nov 2**

Visiting Artist: Michelle Citron on interactive narratives

**Mon Nov 7**

New narratives

Mako Idemitsu, Yoji, What's Wrong With You? (1987, 18 min.) [EAI]

Mako Idemitsu, Kiyoko's Situation (1989, 25 min. ) [EAI]

**Wed Nov 9**

Redefining Broadcasting

Alexander Kluge, Antiques of Advertising, (1988, 15 min.) EAI

Alexander Kluge, The Eiffel Tower, King Kong, and the White Woman (1988, 25 min.) EAI

Jean-Luc Godard and Ann Marie Mieville,

**Mon Nov 14**

Going Digital

Alfred Guzzetti, Calcutta intersection (2003, 10 min)

Leighton Pierce, Pink Socks (5 min)

& TBA

**Wed nov 16**

Personal Stories

Vanalyne Green, A Spy in the House that Ruth Built (30 min,) MMC

Stashu Kybartis, Danny (20 Min) MMC

**Mon Nov 21**

Meghan Sutherland

TBA

**Wed Nov 23 (DAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING)**

Take home final questions handed out

Video Sex

Pamela Anderson & Tommy Lee, stolen home video

Celebrity sex: R. Kelly, Paris Hilton and friends, China, etc. porn as career build

Internet porn cams

Shu Lea Chung, I.K.U. (exerpt)

**Mon Nov 28**

SCREENINGS FOR FINAL

TBA

**Wed Nov 30**

Screenings for final, TBA

Wrap up lecture

**Final Exam** (take home) due

**Thursday Dec 8, 7 pm**

If you do not have the take home exam completed and available in a hard copy to turn in at that time, you **MUST** take the in-class exam.

In class exam: 7pm-9 pm Thursday Dec. 8, Louis 119.

Graduate students must turn in a final paper; the exam is not an option.

**Course policies**

This class is designed to give you the experience of looking at a wide variety of videos. Readings must be completed prior to lecture on the days indicated. My assumption is that you can understand the readings and their relation to the screenings, lecture and discussion on your own. Therefore, do not be deceived about their importance. They are essential background, even though we do not directly discuss them in class most of the time.. You should expect to read the material very closely and to outline its major points. This may involve reading the assignment more than once. It is crucial for success in the course to keep up with the reading and attend all of the lectures and screenings.

You are allowed only two unexcused absences. On the third unexcused absence, you will receive an F on the attendance portion of your grade, and the fourth unexcused absence will result in a further reduction of the final grade.

Undergrad grading is determined as follows:

1. attendance and participation (15 %)
2. inclass midterm (15%)
3. take-home midterm (10%)
4. outside screening reports (10%)
5. Final take-home essay (50%)

Grad grading. Grad students are required to have a short meeting with the prof during the second week of class to set up an individual plan of additional screenings and readings (about one per week) and develop an essay or notes on a topic or specific film covered in the course. This essay is to be written as an informative piece for an undergraduate audience.

1. attendance and participation (10 %)
2. MIDTERM IN-CLASS (10%)
3. MID-TERM TAKEHOME (10%)
4. CMS (Blackboard) assignments (10 %)
5. 1200 word essay or study plan (10%)
6. Final take-home essay or creative project. (50%)

A note on grading

Your grade on the written exercises and final paper will be based on your ability to integrate many of the issues discussed in class and the readings and screenings into an effective, coherent, well-written, and well-organized essay. The purpose of the CMS assignments and final paper is to spur you to make connections between VIDEOS and reading that may not have been explicitly made during class discussions. Thus, a mere reiteration of what I or the writers have said will not by itself be an effective use of the essay exam or term paper format.

Grading criteria:

A An "A" paper or exam represents effort far beyond the basic requirements of the course and is characterized by a bold and original thesis which the student supports with a range of examples from the films and readings. The "A" essay is flawlessly, even elegantly written. These essays are quite rare.

B A "B" essay demonstrates an informed familiarity with all of the films and relevant readings and employs examples effectively to support the central thesis of the piece. The writing should be forceful and effective with many previously hidden connections between the films and readings brought to light.

C A "C" effort represents a coherent and effective reiteration of relevant material from the lectures and discussions accented by an effective use of reading where appropriate. The writing is functional and effective with minimal problems in diction, grammar and mechanics. The great majority of undergraduate essays usually fall within this range.

D A "D" is characterized by minimal engagement with the most important topics from lecture and some use of the most obvious material for the readings. Often, a "C" essay in terms of content is lowered to a "D" because of significant problems with effective writing. In terms of content, the "D" effort often results from a desperate last-minute effort to engage with readings and/or films that the student has not seen or read or from significant absence from class discussion.

F An "F" essay possesses none, or at least very few, of the redeeming characteristics listed above. Typically, these are even more rare than the "A's."

All provisions of the School of Communications and Northwestern University codes and procedures for academic honesty are enforced.

### **Student Conduct in School of Communications Courses**

All undergraduate students in SOC Courses are accountable for the information about academic integrity printed in the University Bulletin. Students are also responsible for the following standards:

- Attendance is required in all Speech courses, and excessive absence is cause for failure.
- Credit will not be given for two courses that meet at the same time.
- To receive credit for a course, students must complete all of the work assigned.
- Assignments must be turned in on time and examinations must be taken as scheduled. Students are not entitled to make up assignments or to grades of Incomplete unless the instructor has approved such arrangements in advance.

### **Statement for Students with Disabilities**

In compliance with Northwestern University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with disability. Request for academic accommodations need to be made during the first week of the quarter, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Service for



Students with Disabilities (SSD) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.